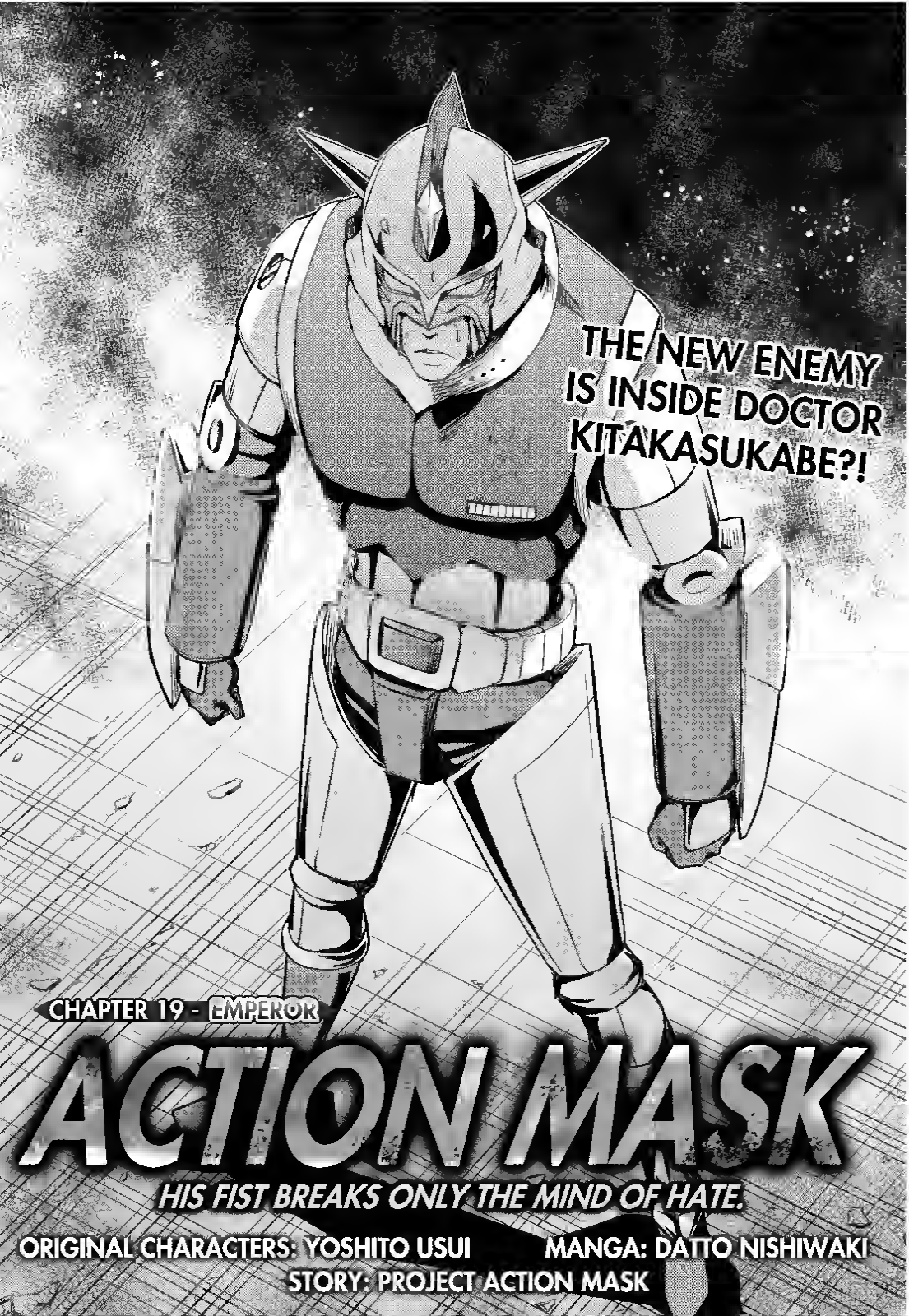
I BELIEVE THIS IS OUR FIRST TIME MEETING, MR. ACTION MASK.
I AM THE EMPEROR.

WHA?!
O...

DOC-
TOR...!

IT CAN'T BE...
HAS HIS BODY... BEEN TAKEN OVER?

YOU SAID...THE EMPEROR?
RRGH...




CHAPTER 19 - EMPEROR

# ACTION MASK

*HIS FIST BREAKS ONLY THE MIND OF HATE.*

ORIGINAL CHARACTERS: YOSHITO USUI MANGA: DATTO NISHIWAKI

STORY: PROJECT ACTION MASK

SORRY FOR THE OLD AND DECREPIT LOOK.
AFTER ALL I'VE BEEN THROUGH, I WANTED TO LOOK A LITTLE MORE MANLY, BUT SOME SACRIFICES HAD TO BE MADE IN THE ESCAPE.

!
OOM

WHAT'RE YOU—

SL
AMM

HMPH...
GOU!
HGCK!
SO THAT'S YOUR NEW PARTNER, HUH?
QUITE PITIFUL, IS HE NOT?

LOOM...
IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
...SO WE FINALLY MEET.
SNEER

KLAT
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
Recognitizing
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BREEEEP
SHEF...
I'VE GOT NO TIME TO DEAL WITH YOU RIGHT NOW.
-!!
JUST SIT BACK AND WATCH AS CLOSELY AS YOU CAN AS EVENTS UNFOLD.
.....
WHISH
KLAT
KLAT

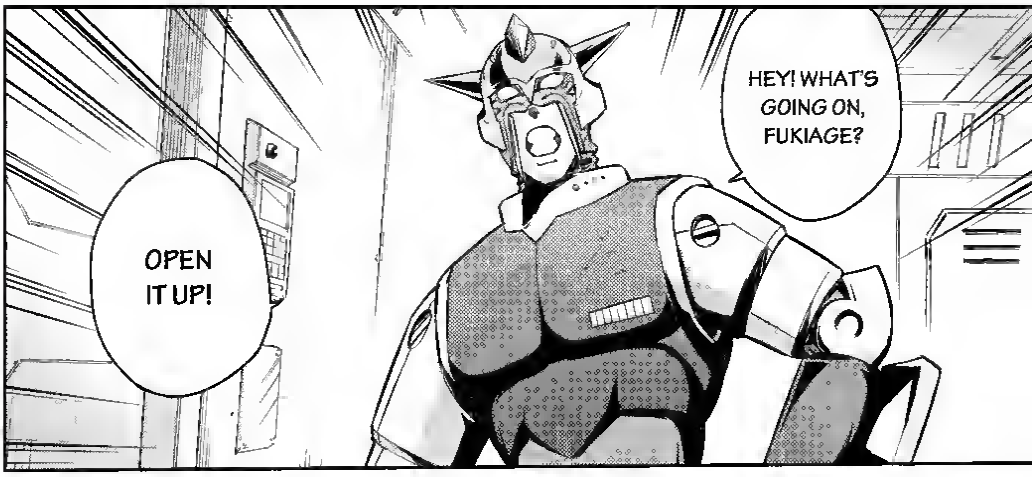
DAMMIT!
WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE?!
SEAL OFF THE FOURTH CORRIDOR.
PLEASE!
SEND SECURITY TO THE SCENE!
EVACUATION ORDER TO ALL STAFF WITHIN THE FACILITY!

BREEEP
HALT!
BREEEP
STOP RIGHT THERE!
HMPH...
SHAK
VVIIIM...

FLASH
K-KABOOM
YOU FELLOWS REALLY LIKE TO WASTE YOUR EFFORTS, DON'T YOU..?
WHA..?!
GAH! UGHH!

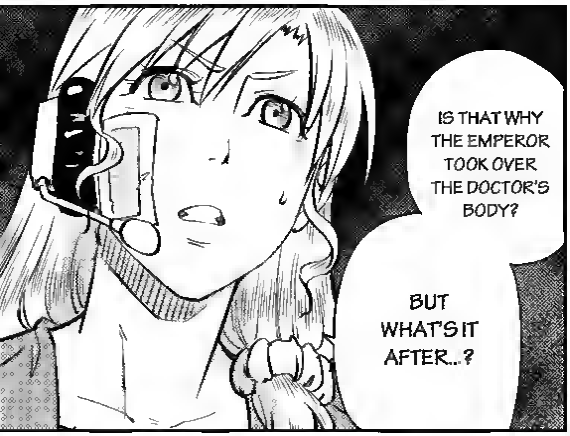
EVERYONE'S DOWN!
HEY!
ざわ…ッ
SHUDDER...
HGCK!
KOFF!
B-BEEP ピピッ
WHERE'S ACTION MASK...?
SCUFF...
CURSES... WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT BEAM?
ITS POWER IS UNLIKE ANYTHING I'VE EVER SEEN!
THAT'S THE POWER OF HATE.
ヨロ…
WAVER...

ピ
BEEEP!
ピピピピピ
B-B-BEEEEP
?!
HE'S CONVERTING ALL THE FEELINGS OF HATE HE'S BUILT UP INTO ENERGY AND THEN FIRING IT OUT.

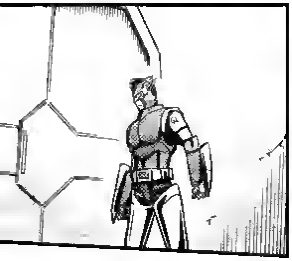

HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON, FUKIAGE?
OPEN IT UP!

I'M ON IT, ALREADY!
WHAT IS IT?
...DAM-MIT!
タタタタタ
TAKA
TAKA
KTAKA

WE ORIGINALLY SHOULD'VE BEEN ABLE TO DISABLE THAT FROM HERE, BUT...
...THE DOCTOR HAS OVERWRITTEN THAT WITH HIS EXECUTIVE PRIVILEGES.
YOU NEED AN ID IN ORDER TO EXIT THAT SHELTER, TOO.

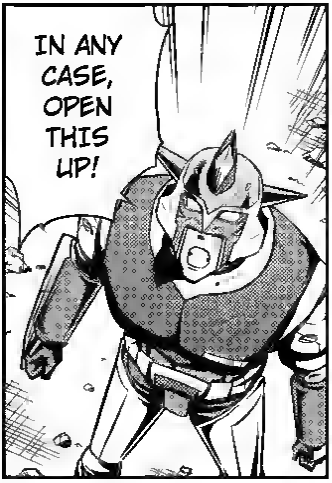

IS THAT WHY THE EMPEROR TOOK OVER THE DOCTOR'S BODY?
BUT WHAT'S IT AFTER...?

HIS LEFT EYE IS THE ABK MASTER KEY, AFTER ALL...



...WHY, YOU!
CLANG

I'M CALLING THE SPECIALISTS HERE, NOW!
JUST HOLD ON FOR A SECOND


IN ANY CASE, OPEN THIS UP!

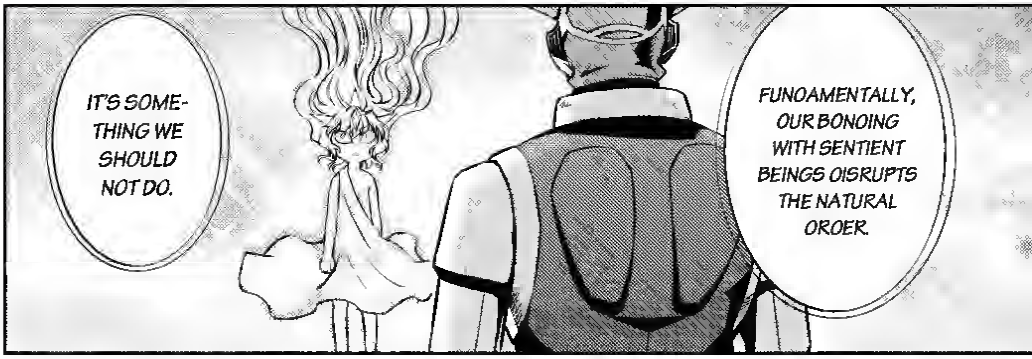
AM I JUST GONNA BE HELPLESS, AGAIN?!
DAMMIT...!
WON'T EVEN BUDGE AN INCH, HUH?
...GOU.
GOU... I'M SORRY.

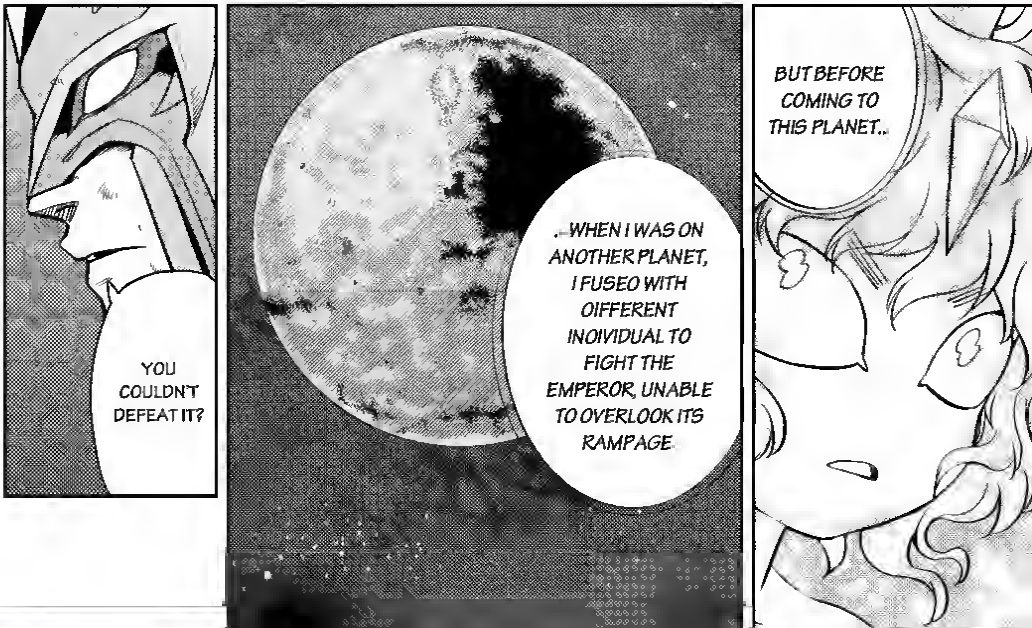
I KNEW ABOUT THE EMPEROR, YET I DIDN'T SAY ANY-THING.
WHAT'S WITH THE FORMALITY?
...IT LOOKS THAT WAY.
...
SKUFF...
CARE TO TALK TO ME, PAL?
NOD...
コクリ…

THE BOTH OF US ARE SIMILAR BEINGS...
WHAT YOU'D CALL BEINGS FROM A "HIGHER DIMENSION."
AND THE REASON I'M HERE ON EARTH IS TO DEFEAT THE EMPEROR.
WE HIGH-DIMENSIONAL BEINGS FEED OFF THE EMOTIONS OF LIVING BEINGS TO SURVIVE.
MOSTLY EMOTIONS LIKE JOY AND BLISS... WE CAN SURVIVE IF WE SENSE POSITIVE FEELINGS NEXT TO US.
YOU KNOW THIS AS WELL, NO?

YES.
THE HATRED BORN FROM BATTLE CAN ALSO BE PURIFIED BY YOUR LAUGHTER.
THAT SORTA STUFF'S PRETTY EMBAR-RASSING TO ME
YEAH.. YOU SURPRISED ME WHEN YOU TOLD ME TO SMILE AFTER OUR FIRST SKIRMISH, BUT..
.. TO THINK THAT THAT'S YOUR ENERGY SOURCE..
IT LEARNED TO GAIN ENERGY FROM "EMOTIONS OF HATRED."
BUT THE EMPEROR... HAO ITS HANDS STEEPED IN TABOO.
IT SHOULD NOT HAVE REACHED OUT FOR IT.
THAT'S WHY IT'S HARD TO CONTROL
HATE IS.. A VERY POWERFUL EMOTION.

AND THEN IT POSSESSED MATSUZAKA-SAN.
. .AND CAME UP WITH THE IDEA TO AMPLIFY THE HATE WITH ITS OWN HANDS, USING THE "SEEDS."
ON TOP OF THAT, IT BONDED WITH THE SENTIENT BEINGS WE WERE TO BE CLOSE WITH.


IT'S SOMETHING WE SHOULD NOT DO.
FUNDAMENTALLY, OUR BONDING WITH SENTIENT BEINGS DISRUPTS THE NATURAL ORDER.

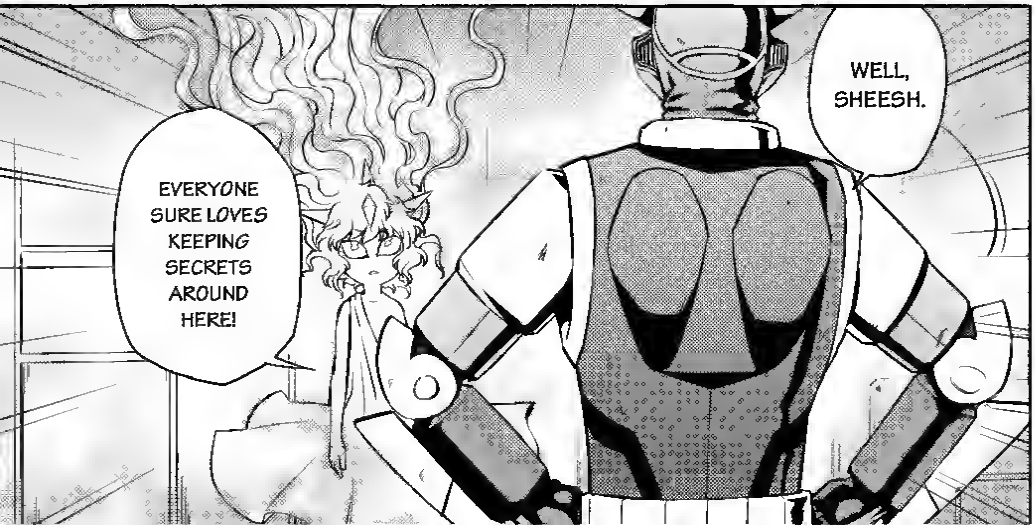

YOU COULDN'T DEFEAT IT?
. .WHEN I WAS ON ANOTHER PLANET, I FUSED WITH DIFFERENT INDIVIDUAL TO FIGHT THE EMPEROR, UNABLE TO OVERLOOK ITS RAMPAGE.
BUT BEFORE COMING TO THIS PLANET..

THE NEXT PLANET YOU MEAN EARTH
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE LAST PLANET?
THEN IT FLED, SEEKING THE NEXT PLANET.
...WE INJURED EACH OTHER SO BADLY
...IT WAS ANNIHILATED.
...!!

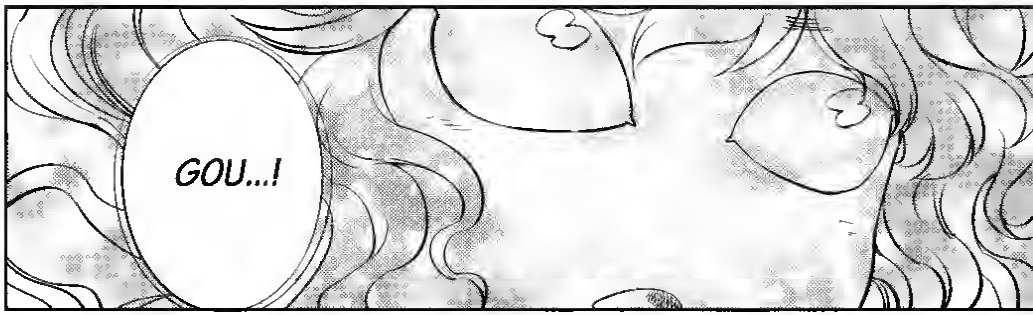
THE NATIVES STARTED WARRING WITH EACH OTHER, AND EVENTUALLY DESTROYED THEMSELVES
THE HATRED WAS JUST TOO GREAT.
.....
MY PARTNER ALSO PERISHED.
IF ONLY I HAD STOPPED IT SOONER...
PAL...
HE WAS SIMILAR TO YOU, GOU..
HE WAS A GOOD SOUL, BRIGHT AND WITH A STRONG SENSE OF JUSTICE

AFTER THAT, AFTER ARRIVING AT THIS PLANET, I MET YOU AND FOUND OUT ABOUT THE MONSTER MASKS APPEARING ALL OVER TOWN.
I FELT THAT, IF WE KEPT GOING AFTER THE MASKS, WE'D EVENTUALLY REACH THE EMPEROR
BUT I SHOULD HAVE SAID SOMETHING SOONER.
...I'M REALLY SO SORRY.

I SEE...
.....


WELL, SHEESH.
EVERYONE SURE LOVES KEEPING SECRETS AROUND HERE!

IT'S ALL RIGHT, PAL.
I KNOW THE SITUATION NOW.
WE'LL GET THE EMPEROR THIS TIME.
TOGETHER!


GOU...!

B-B-BOOM
KABOOM
THEN, COME HERE AND LISTEN...
?
. . . .

B-BOOM
BOOM
AAA-AAGH!
IT'S NO GOOD! THERE'S NO STOPPING HIM...!
SHFF...
LOWER THE BULK-HEADS!
WHR-R-R-RN...
WHR-R-R-RN...
BREEEEP
BREEEEP
DAM-MIT
WHERE'S HE HEADING...?
NOOO!
BOOOOOM

IF HE GETS OUT, THINGS WILL ONLY ESCALATE.
THAT'S THE EXIT.
CLATTER
I WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN...!
I'M GOING TO STOP HIM IN HIS TRACKS.
HOLD ON!
WHAT'S WITH THIS TOUGH-GUY ACT?
MIMI-SAN, CAN I LEAVE THIS TO YOU?
EH?

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN MEN WANNA ACT TOUGH!
AIN'T THAT RIGHT, BOYS!

YEAH!
HOORAH!
THAT'S RIGHT!

WHAT?!
WEREN'T YOU ALL SUPPOSED TO EVACUATE?
ALL THE GUYS HERE OWE DOCTOR KITA-KASUKABE THEIR LIVES!
WE'RE EACH STILL A SMALL PART OF ABK!
WE CAN'T JUST SIT HERE AND TWIDDLE OUR THUMBS WHEN HE'S IN A JAM!

WE DON'T HAVE ONE FOR EVERYBODY, BUT THERE ARE TWENTY EXPERIMENTAL SUITS IN THE HANGAR
FUKIAGE-KUN, ARE YOU REALLY...?
DO YOU THINK YOU CAN TAKE HIM DOWN WITH THOSE?!
WHAT'RE YOU SAYING, HERE?!
TENS OF HUNDREDS OF TIMES MORE THAN YOU EVER WANTED TO.
WE ALL WANTED TO TRY ON THOSE SUITS, YOU KNOW?
BESIDES, MIMI-SAN.
AS IF YOU'RE ONE TO TALK.
ERRM—

MIMI-SAN!
LET US DO THIS, MIMI-SAN!
DAMN STRAIGHT!

ALL OF YOU...
FUKIAGE-KUN...

AND BE CAREFUL OUT THERE.

...ALL RIGHT.
BUT WE'RE ONLY BUYING TIME UNTIL GOU GETS THERE.
DO NOT INJURE THE DOCTOR.

HOORAH!
ALL RIGHT...
LET'S DO THIS!
WE'LL HANDLE THE DOORS.
ROGER!
LET'S GET GOU OUT OF THERE, STAT!
MIMI-SAN!
DARK MASK... NO.
LURCH...
MATSUZAKA-SAN IS...!
PHEW...

CLANG
CLANG
WHY! THE HELL!
IS THIS DOOR! SO FRIGGIN-
HARD?!

YOU IDIOT.
YOU'LL WRECK YOUR SUIT.
トン
PAT

THAT ASSHOLE
USING UP PEOPLE'S BODIES LIKE THAT... AND THEN DITCHING THEM WHEN THEY'RE WORN OUT.
SOME-HOW.
YOU'RE ALIVE.
MATSU-ZAKA-SAN...!

CLANG
SERIOUSLY.
NOT ONE SHRED OF FRIGGIN' GRATITUDE, THERE... HUP!
YOU KNOW. I DIG THIS SORTA STUFF WAY MORE THAN MY UNIVERSITY RESEARCH.
POK
SHUT UP A SEC.
!
MATSU-ZAKA-SAN, WHAT'RE YOU..?
IF I CHANGE THE WIRING ON THIS PANEL, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO RESET THE PASSWORD.
スチャ
KCHAK

START ENTERING THE CODE I'M ABOUT TO GIVE YOU.
ROGER.
YO! YOU LISTENING UP THERE?
MATSU-ZAKA-SAN..
I DON'T EXPECT THAT DOING THIS WILL ERASE ALL MY SINS, BUT..
..TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU CAN ABOUT THE EMPEROR.
IT SEEMS THAT WHILE IT WAS RESIDING IN ME, IT LEFT FROM TIME TO TIME TO SPREAD ALL THOSE SEEDS AS IT FOCUSED ON RECOVERING FROM ITS WOUNDS
THE EMPEROR HAD BURNED THROUGH ALMOST ALL ITS STRENGTH WHEN WE FIRST MET.

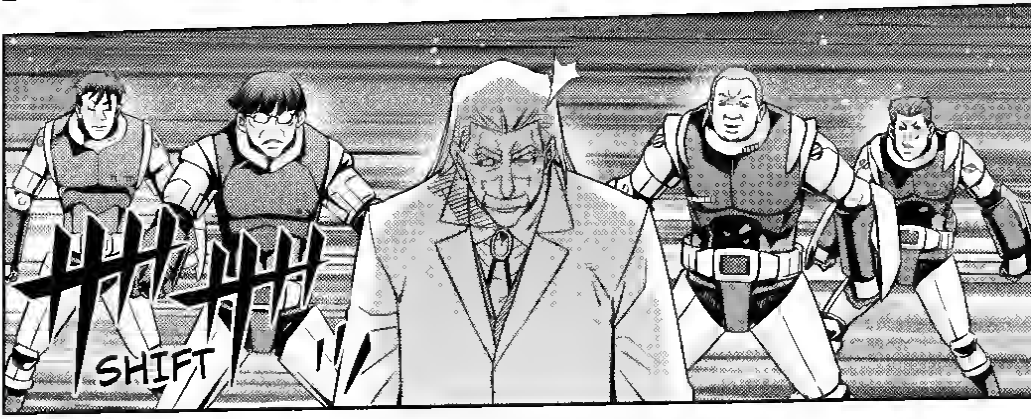
THEN NOW IS...
THAT'S WHY IT COULDN'T MOVE ON ITS OWN UP UNTIL NOW.
HEH...
BREEEEEEP
THAT LOOKS LIKE ITS ENERGY IS JUST ABOUT FULL UP, NOW.
BREEEEEEP
IT HAS LIKELY STORED UP FAR GREATER POWER THAN IT HAD BEFORE.

BEEP BEEP BEEP
ピピピッ
WHOOM...
FWI
IIISH
SKUFF
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, EMPEROR!
...HMMMN?

A
EAM

WE WON'T LET YOU GET AWAY WITH THIS ANY LONGER!
HOW IMPU-DENT.
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT WHAT CAN YOU HUMANS DO TO ME?
HH
GL

IT MAY BE TRUE THAT HUMANS ARE WEAK COMPARED TO YOU.
HOWEVER... WE AREN'T ALONE!


SHIFT

WE HAVE ALLIES.
WE HAVE STRENGTH IN NUMBERS!

SNEER
THAT'S PATHETIC FOR A YOUNG ONE.
THAT'S WHAT THE BAD GUY SAYS.
HO HO, NOW.
FINE BY US!
DASH
NOW RETURN OUR DOCTOR KITAKASUKABE TO US, FIEND...!!

B-BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
KACHANG
BEEP
MATSU-ZAKA-SAN...!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.
GET GOING.
.. ALL RIGHT.
I'LL SEND MEDICS OVER RIGHT AWAY, SO WAIT RIGHT HERE.
TURN...
!
MATSU-ZAKA-SAN...!
PHEW.
THUMP

BE CAREFUL, GOU...
THAT BASTARD'S SPEEDING UP THE HATRED AMPLIFICATION.
IT'S TIRED OF MY METHOD OF PLANTING ONE SEED AT A TIME.
ONCE IT'S HEALED, IT WILL SPREAD ALL ITS SEEDS IN ONE GO.
THAT'S WHAT IT SAID.

IT WANTS TO FILL THE TOWN WITH MONSTER MASKS...?!
A PRELUDE TO THE DESTRUCTION OF EARTH...?!